From: Association of Deputy District Attorneys
To: Daniel Cohen
Subject: Monday Morning Memo for February 24, 2020
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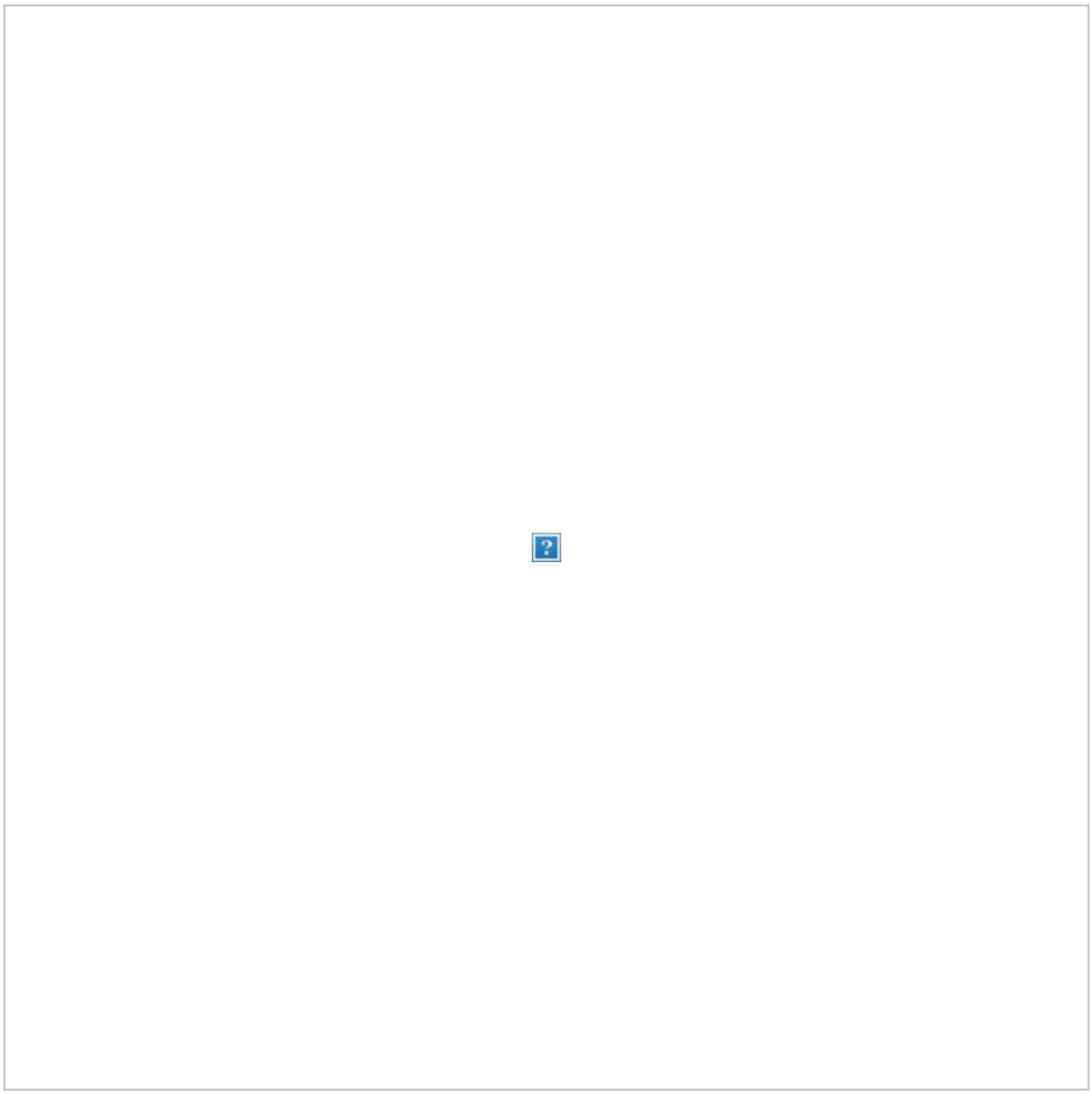

Courts & Rulings

California appeals court says nonviolent sex offenders eligible for early parole

Thousands of California prisoners who were convicted of nonviolent sex

crimes, such as pimping and possessing child pornography, must be considered for early parole under a voter-approved initiative, a state appeals court has ruled, rejecting a contrary decision by state prison officials. Thursday's ruling by the Third District Court of Appeal in Sacramento was the latest and most far-reaching of a series of appellate decisions broadly interpreting Proposition 57, passed by a 64.5% vote in November 2016.
San Francisco Chronicle

Immigrant acquitted of murder in Kate Steinle shooting is not competent to stand trial due to mental illness, evaluator says
A court evaluator concluded Jose Ines Garcia Zarate is not competent to stand trial on federal gun charges "because of a mental illness that is not presently being treated," according to a court document from the US District Court in California. Garcia Zarate, an undocumented immigrant, was acquitted of murder in the 2015 San Francisco Pier shooting of Kate Steinle, a 32-year-old medical device sales representative.
CNN

Lawyer's suit for wrongful handcuffing of her may proceed
The Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals has reversed a summary judgment in favor of the City of Los Angeles and two of its police officers in an action by a Century City entertainment lawyer who was handcuffed behind her back when arrested on a traffic warrant despite her protest that she had a severely injured shoulder that was "frozen" and that such positioning of her arms would result in extreme pain.
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

Federal judges' association calls emergency meeting after DOJ intervenes in case of Trump ally Roger Stone
A national association of federal judges has called an emergency meeting to address growing concerns about the intervention of Justice Department officials and President Donald Trump in politically sensitive cases, the group's president said Monday. Philadelphia U.S. District Judge Cynthia Rufe, who heads the independent Federal Judges Association, said the group "could not wait" until its spring conference to weigh in on a deepening crisis that has enveloped the Justice Department and Attorney General William Barr.
USA Today

Jury slaps detective with punitive damages in death of wrongfully accused man
A California jury awarded $50,000 in punitive damages Tuesday to the widow and estate of a crime lab worker who killed himself after being wrongly implicated in a murder investigation. The jury found former San Diego Police Department detective Michael Lambert should be punished for misleading a judge when obtaining a search warrant in a cold-case murder investigation.

Courthouse News Service

Deputy district attorney is in uphill battle with deputy attorney general
The ballot designation of "Deputy District Attorney" is normally formidable. Candidate Robert "Bob" Villa holds that position. However, "Deputy District Attorney, Los Angeles County" may provide little or no advantage to him in the March 3 primary in light of the designation of his opponent, Linda L. Sun: "Deputy Attorney General, State of California."
Metropolitan News-Enterprise

ADDA endorsements for L.A. Superior Court judges
The Association of Deputy District Attorneys endorses the following individuals in the 2020 Los Angeles County judicial races: For Los Angeles Superior Court Judge: Seat 42 - Robert Villa, Seat 72 - Stephen Morgan, Seat 76 - Emily Cole, Seat 80 - David Berger and Nicholas Rini, Seat 97 - Sherry Powell, Seat 145 - Adan Montalban, Seat 150 - Manuel Almada and Seat 162 - Scott Yang.
LA ADDA

Sheriff: Criminal justice advocate planted guns, ammunition in detention center
A longtime criminal justice advocate is accused of hiding guns in the new detention center as part of what authorities called a massive escape plan. Davidson County Sheriff Daron Hall said Alex Friedmann hid loaded guns, various tools and additional ammunition in the new detention center over a period of several months.
News Channel5 Nashville

Baseball fan can sue over foul ball to the face, California appeals court rules
A foul ball to the face is not an anticipated part of the sport, nor an assumed risk for baseball spectators, according to an appeals court decision. California's Second District Court of Appeal ruled Tuesday that installing protective netting along the first- and third-base lines at ball parks would not necessarily alter the nature of the game, signaling a shift in the court's interpretation of the primary assumption of risk doctrine.
Law.com

Judge scolds feds for not turning screw in PG&E criminal case
A federal judge scolded a federal prosecutor Wednesday for refusing to take a stand on whether Pacific Gas and Electric should be placed under more stringent probation conditions for failing to meet required safety targets. "Are you just going to let California burn up because the offender here is running wild over the people of California," U.S. District Judge William Alsup said.
Courthouse News Service

CA Supreme Court denies request to review the SB 1437 constitutionality ruling
On Feb. 19, 2020, the California Supreme Court denied the depublication and review requests for the Fourth District Appellate court decisions on two case opinions that ruled Senate Bill 1437 constitutional. On Nov. 19, 2019, the Fourth District Appellate District, Division One Court of California published opinions on the People v. the Superior Court of San Diego County/Gooden/Dominguez and the People v. Lamoureux, two cases that considered the constitutionality of Senate Bill 1437.
The Davis Vanguard

Sonoma County officials condemn ICE arrests. 24 hours later, 2 more were detained
U.S. immigration agents in Sonoma County have arrested at least five people since Tuesday including three at the county's courthouse in an enforcement sweep condemned by Sonoma criminal justice leaders. At least three people were arrested Tuesday morning outside Sonoma Superior Court in Santa Rosa by federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents, Sonoma officials said.
The Tribune

Prosecutors/ Prosecutions

District Attorney Jackie Lacey announces historic $18.8 million settlement with Time Warner Cable over internet speeds
Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey today announced a historic $18.8 million settlement with Time Warner Cable LLC on behalf of more than 170,000 consumers throughout California who paid for internet speeds they did not receive. It is the largest direct restitution order ever secured by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office in a consumer protection lawsuit.
Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office News Release

LAPD union accused of 'racism' after releasing ad targeting Latino D.A. candidate
A union representing more than 9,900 sworn members of the Los Angeles Police Department has been accused of racism after releasing a television advertisement targeting Democrat George Gascón - the former district attorney in San Francisco who is currently running to become L.A. County's top law enforcement official.
The Daily Wire

LA DA candidate George Gascon rails against the police
Former San Francisco District Attorney George Gascon wants to be the next district attorney of Los Angeles County. If he wants to run on past accomplishments, he cannot. His anti-law enforcement policies helped San Francisco careen into a cesspool of filth and lawlessness. By helping

to write Proposition 47, enacted in 2014, he undermined law enforcement efforts to reduce theft and drug trafficking and is directly responsible for the explosion of homeless encampments in San Francisco and Los Angeles.
Pasadena Star-News

LA DA Jackie Lacey runs for a 3rd term as a 'reasonable reformer'
L.A District Attorney Jackie Lacey says she's misunderstood. She says she's not part of the old guard. But she also says she's not a progressive. So what is she? "I would describe myself as a reasonable reformer," L.A.'s top prosecutor told me as we sat in a downtown law firm on a recent weekday morning. From our vantage point on the 40th floor, we stared out the window down on a car-swamped Figueroa Street - just a tiny sliver of L.A. County's 2,000 square miles.
LAist

Chesa Boudin: San Francisco's lawless revolutionary
Last month San Francisco got a new District Attorney, Chesa Boudin. The City-by-the-Bay's new top prosecutor has made it his signature "policy" (if you can call it that) to not enforce laws against so-called "quality of life" crimes: public urination, prostitution, camping, drug use, etc. On its own, this isn't totally crazy. Incarceration isn't the answer to everything. The real problem comes when this policy is combined with another: California's Proposition 47, laughably referred to by its proponents as "The Safe Neighborhood and Schools Act."
The Stanford Review

A growing, and welcome, trend: Women prosecutors in California's courts
Since America's women won the right to vote a century ago, they have had to fight a continuing battle for equality in employment. In one area, however, women now rule the workplace: California prosecutors' offices. Public prosecution was once a male domain. When I was first a county prosecutor 50 years ago, California had not one female district attorney.
The Fresno Bee

New, more progressive prosecutors are angering police, who warn approach will lead to chaos
In early December, police officers here pulled over their squad car to talk to a homeless man about a burglary report. He immediately attacked them with a vodka bottle. After Jamaica Hampton, 24, drew blood with his blows and refused orders to get on the ground, officers shot him three times, wounding him in the leg. Hampton was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, and his left leg was amputated in surgery.
USA Today

New Huawei indictment alleges trade-secret theft, secret surveillance
Prosecutors unsealed a superseding federal indictment Thursday that puts the Chinese tech company Huawei at the center of a conspiracy to steal trade secrets and to do business with the globally sanctioned countries Iran and North Korea. As detailed in the Eastern District of New York filing, Huawei's projects included domestic surveillance in Iran, a country that like North Korea faces sanctions from the United Nations, European Union and United States.
Courthouse News Service

How and why the nation's crime busters are becoming criminal enablers
A newly minted district attorney for a major American city vows to establish an immigration unit. At first blush, that would seem entirely normal for a prosecutor's office. Immigration laws require enforcement, and prosecutors are in the law-enforcement business. But no - the new San Francisco DA actually has in mind an immigration defense unit.
Commentary Magazine

DA: Teens suspected in deadly Porterville library fire can't be tried as adults
Two boys are accused of setting a blaze that killed two Porterville firefighters and destroyed the city's main library. The Porterville City Library fire was reported at 4 p.m. and wasn't extinguished until Wednesday morning. Dozens of local and state fire fighting agencies responded to the deadly fire.
Visalia Times-Delta

US prosecutors end old terror case against California man
One of the nation's highest profile post-9/11 terrorism cases fully unraveled Friday, with federal prosecutors saying they won't pursue charges after a judge last year overturned the conviction of a man who had been linked to a purported al-Qaida sleeper cell in California and spent 14 years in prison.
AP

Attorney general's actions spark outrage and unease among US prosecutors
As the clash between Justice Department leaders and career prosecutors in the case of President Donald Trump's longtime friend Roger Stone spilled into public earlier this week, the leaders of the public-corruption unit in the Manhattan US attorney's office sat on a courtroom bench, watching with unease as the news flashed across their cell phone screens.
CNN

Oakland prosecutors decline to file charges in Moms 4 Housing case

Alameda County prosecutors on Thursday told attorneys for the Moms 4 Housing group that occupied a vacant West Oakland home for about two months that four people arrested during their eviction last month in West Oakland will not be charged. Legal counsel for the Moms 4 Housing group was informed around 1 p.m. Thursday that prosecutors reviewed reports by the sheriff's office and will not charge Misty Cross, Tolani King and two supporters for the group.
NBC Bay Area

Policy/ Legal Issues

Villanueva rebukes immigration-agent boost in sanctuary cities
Following reports that the Trump administration plans to dispatch dozens of elite U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents to so-called "sanctuary cities" to enforce immigration laws, Los Angeles Sheriff Alex Villanueva said he disapproves of the action. The agents are part of the Border Patrol Tactical Unit, or BORTAC.
City News Service

Analyst urges California to reject switch to short probation
Gov. Gavin Newsom's proposal to sharply reduce the time a convict is under supervised release could wind up sending more criminals to jail or prison, the reverse of what he intends, the nonpartisan legislative analyst said Tuesday. It recommended that California lawmakers reject the idea. Newsom wants to set a maximum two-year limit on probation terms, down from five for felons and three for those convicted of misdemeanors.
AP

The moral crisis of Skid Row
Skid Row is the epicenter of L.A.'s addiction crisis. More than 12,000 homeless meth and heroin addicts pass through here each year, with thousands living in the vast network of tent encampments that line the sidewalks. For decades, L.A. has centralized public services in this tiny city-within-a-city. The result: it's become an iron cage of the social state, with the highest concentration of homelessness, addiction, and overdose deaths in Los Angeles County.
City Journal

Algorithms were supposed to fix the bail system. They haven't
If you are booked into jail in New Jersey, a judge will decide whether to hold you until trial or set you free. One factor the judge must weigh: the result from an algorithm called PSA that estimates how likely you are to skip court or commit another crime. New Jersey adopted algorithmic risk assessment in 2014 at the urging, in part, of the nonprofit Pretrial Justice Institute.
Wired

Are pretrial risk assessments biased? The debate sharpens

Advocates of reducing jail populations have persuaded many courts around the U.S. to use tools known as pretrial risk assessments to help judges decide which defendants to release pending the disposition of their cases. Critics contend that these tools are biased against minorities because they are based partly on suspects' criminal records in a justice system that has long been accused of practicing racial discrimination.
The Crime Report

Bail reform in Chicago appears to have increased crime
In a study posted on SSRN today, my colleague Professor Richard Fowles and I explore the public safety implications of recent Cook County bail reforms. We review the Cook County Chief Judge's study of these reforms, which sanguinely asserted that as more defendants were released pretrial no additional crimes resulted. We believe that, properly assessed, the study's own data suggests a significant increase in crimes as a result of the changes.
Reason

Can the criminal justice system be fixed? The jury's still out
My latest experience with jury duty highlighted some of the well-known flaws in how our system determines an accused person's guilt or innocence. I was close to being impaneled when the judge asked whether any of us had previously dealt with district attorneys. I'm perfectly willing to serve on a jury, but answered honestly despite knowing the likely result.
Reason

ICE subpoenas sheriff's department for migrant arrestee information
For the first time, federal immigration authorities Friday served subpoenas on a local law enforcement agency in California - the San Diego County Sheriff's Department - in a bid to compel it to release migrant-arrest information protected by sanctuary state legislation.
City News Service

Should L.A. park rangers carry guns? A city councilman says yes
Los Angeles City Councilman Joe Buscaino wants to change city rules to allow park rangers to carry guns, arguing that it would better protect both rangers and parkgoers. In a proposal introduced Tuesday, Buscaino argued that park rangers routinely patrol "remote and desolate areas" and should have access to "all law enforcement tools and equipment" to keep people safe.
Los Angeles Times

New California bill would enforce harsher punishment for repeat porch pirates
A California lawmaker introduced a bill that would enforce harsher punishments for repeat porch pirates. Sen. Brian Jones wants to make repeat offenses punishable with more prison time. Current law makes

package theft a misdemeanor, punishable with imprisonment in a county jail for no more than one year. Senate Bill 979 would make the act of entering the curtilage of a person's property, with the intent to steal, a crime.
ABC30 Fresno

Inmate firefighters' criminal records could be expunged after release
California inmate firefighters could have their criminal records wiped clean under a proposed law introduced this week. AB 2147, introduced by Assemblymember Eloise Gómez Reyes (D-San Bernadino) on Monday, would speed-up the expungement process for inmates who successfully worked as inmate hand crews, assisting with the suppression of California wildfires.
CBS13 Sacramento

Term 'at-risk youth' replaced with 'at-promise youth' in California penal codes
The term "at-risk youth" was commonly used in both penal and education codes in California - until now. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed legislation that went into effect on Jan. 1 that officially wiped the phrase from the state's language. The phrase will now be replaced by "at-promise youth." Assemblymember Byron Jones-Sawyer (D-South Los Angeles), who penned the passed legislation, says the measure will change the negative connotation that comes along with the "at-risk" label.
CBS13 Sacramento

South Bay lawmaker pushes for felony charges in car thefts targeting electronics
Car break-ins have become an epidemic in California and most of those crimes don't result in an arrest or successful prosecution. But one state lawmaker wants to change that. "We know that people risk their life to save their personal devices," said Rep. Kansen Chu. Recognizing all the valuable information stored on our phones, tablets and laptops, Chu wants to make it a felony to steal electronic devices, even if they don't meet the current $950 threshold that separates felonies from misdemeanors.
CBS SF Bay Area

Los Angeles County/City

City's hybrid policing model is closer to reality
The City's proposed hybrid policing model will move into the next phase of its development with a projected summertime start date. Consultants from Hillard Heintze - the Chicago-based law enforcement-consulting firm hired nearly one year ago to develop options for the hybrid policing model - presented their report Tuesday night to the City Council.
Antelope Valley Press

Sheriff demotes Malibu captain (that's #3) after intruder case mishandled
A sexual assault at a Malibu condominium left the victim traumatized, and resulted in the demotion and transfer of the fourth high-level Malibu sheriff's commander within a short span. Capt. Matt Vander Horck was demoted and relieved of duty today, according to a phone call made to City Manager Reva Feldman. "We were informed that Capt. Check Becerra would be coming back."
991KBU Malibu

LA County Board votes to eliminate many criminal justice fees, forgive debt
The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted unanimously today to eliminate many county-imposed criminal justice fees and forgive related debt. Supervisors Hilda Solis and Sheila Kuehl co-authored a motion recommending an end to all administrative fees the board controls as well as support for Senate Bill 144, which would eliminate many similar state fees.
NBC4 Los Angeles

4 1/2 years after the DOJ settlement, basic needs for LA County jail's mentally ill inmates still aren't being met
"Welcome to the zoo," said LA County Sheriff's Deputy Jacob Allen, motioning to the figures behind him wearing bright-colored jumpsuits stamped with the words LA COUNTY JAIL. The men are separated from Allen and other guards by a thick glass wall. In addition, each inmate is behind a locked metal door, with the exception of a tall, bearded man standing chained to a wall in the center of the room.
Witness LA

LA County sheriff, civilian-oversight advocates square off over Measure R
Voters' approval of Los Angeles County Measure R would give the county's Civilian Oversight Commission the power to subpoena documents from the Sheriff's Department and make that ability permanent, not subject to political whims of the Board of Supervisors. Proponents who want stronger scrutiny of the law enforcement agency, especially following deputy-involved shootings, believe the measure would enable the commission to fulfill its watchdog role while requiring the Sheriff to supply its members with records he doesn't want to hand over.
Los Angeles Daily News

Consumer

Safety expert warns of counterfeit online products
If you're an Amazon shopper, keep your eyes peeled for counterfeit products. Some falsely advertised car seats could put kids at risk. State

Traffic Safety Coordinator Janna Day said there have already been instances of that in Iowa. Nearly 40 percent of all e-commerce sales happen on Amazon. There's a lot to choose from on this third-party seller, but is everything you see for sale legitimate?
KCCI Des Moines

Californians' class-action against AT&T over phone speeds can proceed
Consumers in California can proceed with a class-action suit against AT&T for slowing down data speeds on mobile phones despite a promise of unlimited service, a federal appeals court ruled Tuesday. The lawsuit, filed in San Francisco in 2015, suffered an apparently fatal setback a year later when U.S. District Judge Edward Chen said he was bound by the provisions in AT&T's customer contracts to refer each customer to arbitration with AT&T rather than a collective suit in court.
San Francisco Chronicle

Public Safety/Crime

Ex-boyfriend arrested in death of celebrity sex therapist Amie Harwick, LAPD says
Amie Harwick, a celebrity therapist who counseled marriages and wrote about sex and relationships, was killed at her Hollywood Hills home Saturday, and an ex-boyfriend has been arrested in her death, Los Angeles police said. Officers were called to the home at 1:16 a.m. after a report of a "woman screaming," according to authorities. A roommate of Harwick, 38, met police on the street and said she was being assaulted inside the home.
NBC News

'Lord of the Flies': Fights, bullying, chaos upend San Francisco middle school
Middle school is rarely easy - but it should never, ever be this hard. Aptos Middle School stands grandly among stunning homes near some of the city's toniest neighborhoods: Saint Francis Wood, Mount Davidson Manor and Ingleside Terraces. It's long been one of San Francisco Unified School District's most desirable, renowned middle schools. But lately, the calm, stately exterior has masked chaos inside.
San Francisco Chronicle

How rapid DNA technology helped a desperate family find answers in Grandmother's death
When a body was found at a mobile home park during the Sandalwood Fire in Calimesa last October, family members of 89-year-old Lois Arvickson feared it was her. They were on the phone with the mother, grandmother and great-grandmother when the line went dead. They searched nearby shelters to see if Arvickson had survived, but couldn't find her.
NBC4 Los Angeles

After 15 years in prison, Northern California man free after DNA site leads to new arrest in murder
California authorities used recently developed DNA techniques to free one man and implicate another for only the second time in the United States, officials said Thursday. A man who spent about 15 years in prison after being wrongfully convicted in the slaying of his housemate has been exonerated after authorities used extended DNA links developed through publicly available genealogical websites to build a family tree that led to the arrest of a new suspect.
AP

LAPD's license plate reader system failing to protect driver privacy, audit finds
A state audit this week blasted the Los Angeles Police Department and three other agencies for not doing enough to protect the privacy of the driver data they collect from their license plate readers. The report released Thursday determined that the LAPD's Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) system has failed to protect driver privacy regarding how it shares its data and who can access it.
CBS LA

Juvenile arrested for road rage brass-knuckle punch that left victim in coma, LAPD says
A juvenile who fled to Armenia has been arrested in connection with a January road-rage incident in Southern California that left a man in a coma, authorities announced Thursday. Robert Hovhannisyan and the juvenile were identified as the primary suspects in the New Year's Day attack, which was captured on video by a bystander about 9:30 p.m. near Woodman Avenue and Victory Boulevard, according to the Los Angeles Police Department.
ABC30 Fresno

Caught On Camera: Suspected carjacking thwarted by good samaritans
It was moments of sheer terror for a mother and her child until good Samaritans jumped into action and thwarted a suspected carjacker in the Fairfax District this week. Cell phone video shows officers trying to handcuff a man who they say had just jumped into a woman's car that was stopped at the intersection of Poinsettia Place and Willoughby Avenue Wednesday afternoon.
CBS LA

A decorated detective, a suspected mobster: How a secret alliance ended in claims of blood and betrayal
The Escalade was headed down a dreary and industrial stretch of road in Commerce when the first bullet buried itself in the driver's back. He stomped on the gas. Bullets slammed into the car. Blood leaked from his gut. The black SUV was ferrying the son of Lev Aslan Dermen, a

petroleum mogul and suspected organized crime figure. His son escaped, unscathed.
Los Angeles Times

California/National

ICE arrests MS-13 member, says he threatened New York police officers
Federal immigration officials arrested an MS-13 gang member Thursday after they received word he threatened to shoot police in New York City, a law enforcement source told Fox News. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents took Armando Clemente Ramos into custody after it was alleged he threatened officers in the 41st precinct in the Bronx - the same precinct where two officers were shot less than a week ago.
Fox News

Perfect compliance with wildfire-safety laws impossible, PG&E tells judge
Pacific Gas and Electric urged a federal judge not to impose new probation conditions that would force the company to hire more tree workers and tie executive bonuses exclusively to fire safety. Overseeing PG&E's criminal probation for felony convictions related to the fatal 2010 San Bruno pipeline explosion, U.S. District Judge William Alsup ordered the company in January to show cause why it should not be subject to new probation conditions.
Courthouse News Service

In California: The state's housing crunch is literally making people sick
A room infested with mice, rats and cockroaches. Showers under a cold drip of water amid moldy walls impenetrable by bleach. Fierce asthma attacks, induced by rodent feces. These are hallmarks of California's housing crisis. Health officials are now warning that the substandard and often overcrowded conditions are becoming a crisis of their own.
USA Today

Internet crime cost Americans $3.5 billion in 2019, says FBI
Internet scams and other types of cybercrime cost Americans more than $3.5 billion last year, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In the annual report of the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3), the agency said the number of reported complaints had nearly doubled since 2015, from 288,012 to 467, 361 in 2019 - and reported losses increased five-fold since in the same period.
The Crime Report

Some dem justice reforms could fuel a new 'crime wave,' warns critic
Several of the justice reforms advocated by Democrats running for president could fuel a new crime wave, claims a critic writing in the

conservative National Review. Proposals by front-runner candidates to reduce by 50 percent the number of people incarcerated in the U.S., eliminate private prisons and curtail mandatory-minimum sentences reflect arguments of reformers to make the system "less punitive," wrote Barry Latzer, an emeritus professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice.
The Crime Report

Trump grants clemency to Blagojevich, Milken and Kerik
President Trump, citing what he said was advice from friends and business associates, granted clemency on Tuesday to a who's who of white-collar criminals from politics, sports and business who were convicted on charges involving fraud, corruption and lies - including the financier Michael R. Milken. The president pardoned Mr. Milken, the so-called junk bond king of the 1980s, as well as the former New York City police commissioner Bernard B. Kerik and Edward J. DeBartolo Jr., a former owner of the San Francisco 49ers.
AP

Corrections/Parole

California to move hundreds of inmates off largest death row; ex-DA calls it 'slap to the face' of victims
California could move 700 death row inmates to eight other facilities within the state where they will be housed with non-condemned prisoners and have access to rehabilitation and work programs, something a former district attorney calls "a slap to the face" to victims. The move giving inmates at San Quentin State Prison's all-male death row the option to transfer to other facilities is actually part of a ballot initiative approved four years ago to speed up executions.
Fox News

California death row inmate dies; prisoner killed in attack
A death row inmate died Saturday at a hospital, while the previous day another prisoner was killed after two inmates attacked him, California officials said. John Abel - who was sentenced to death row for killing a man in 1991 during a robbery at a bank in Orange County - died Saturday morning at a hospital, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said in a statement. He was 75.
AP

CA prisoner asks court to limit noise, let him get sleep
All Christopher Lipsey Jr. wants is a fighting chance at a good night's sleep. But the 34-year-old Corcoran State Prison inmate says he and hundreds of other prisoners have been subjected to virtual "torture" through the use of nightly welfare checks in the security housing unit, or SHU, conducted every half hour with pipe-like electronic devices that cause loud clanging noises and increase the possibility of suicide and

mental degradation.
Sacramento Bee

Report gives states failing grade in inmate education
A new national report shows how state policies fail to support, and often restrict, incarcerated people from accessing continued education, despite research showing that such education can significantly reduce re-offending and increase employment rates, says the Council of State Governments Justice Center. The report, "Laying the Groundwork: How States Can Improve Access to Continued Education for People in the Criminal Justice System," says that only 10 states allow all people behind bars to access college and employment certification courses, while the rest prohibit some inmates from participating.
The Crime Report

California takes a first step toward improving its failing county jails
California's county jails would face greater scrutiny and potentially tougher consequences for poor conditions inside their cells under a series of proposed changes unveiled by a state oversight agency last week. Specifically, the Board of State and Community Corrections plans to publicize details about uncorrected violations in jails and summon elected county sheriffs who delay reforms or rebuff the oversight agency.
ProPublica

Sentences/Convictions/Parole

Michael Avenatti is convicted in Nike extortion trial
Michael Avenatti, the brash lawyer best known for representing the pornographic film actress Stormy Daniels in her lawsuits against President Trump, was convicted on Friday of trying to extort more than $20 million from the apparel giant Nike. After three days of deliberations in the case, brought by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan, a jury found him guilty on all three counts, including attempted extortion and honest services fraud.
New York Times

Man convicted of stealing car and running over carjacking victim
A Los Angeles resident was convicted Monday of first-degree murder and carjacking for running over a 54-year-old man after stealing the victim's pickup truck in the Westlake area. Mitchell Ray Castillo, 38, could face 60 years to life in prison for the Dec. 11, 2017, murder of Ricardo Mota, according to the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office. A sentencing date has not been set.
NBC4 Los Angeles

A former owner of Newsweek pleads guilty in a fraud scheme
The Manhattan district attorney's office seized 18 computer servers from

the headquarters of Newsweek magazine in Lower Manhattan on Jan. 18, 2018. On Friday, the raid yielded guilty pleas to fraud and money-laundering charges from two publishing executives in Manhattan Criminal Court.
New York Times

Articles of Interest

Group addresses suicide rate among firefighters, pushes for support and prevention
Whether it's a house fire, a car accident, or even a helicopter crash that claimed nine lives, what firefighters see and experience over time can take a toll. Research shows Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and depression rates for firefighters can be five times higher than the civilian population. Just last year, more than twice as many firefighters died by suicide than died while on duty.
ABC7 Los Angeles

The new thing for California politicians? Sweet charity
The California Legislature's Latino Caucus recently circulated a memo offering a potential perk for members: A trip to Cuba to learn about "culture, history and possibly government structure and policy making." The caucus' nonprofit foundation, the memo said, would help pick up the tab. A visit to Israel for the Jewish Caucus was similarly underwritten, in part, by its nonprofit.
Public CEO

Trump adviser presses House investigators to make Bezos testify
A top White House adviser is pressing lawmakers on the House Judiciary Committee to bring Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos to testify before Congress, a request that could shake up the political dynamics around the investigation into the country's largest tech companies. At a private meeting this week, White House trade adviser Peter Navarro told the Republicans and Democrats leading the House's antitrust investigation into Big Tech that they should invite Bezos and other e-commerce executives to testify about counterfeits, sources confirmed to The Hill.
The Hill

Sex-abuse claims force Boy Scouts to file for bankruptcy
The Boy Scouts of America filed for bankruptcy protection Tuesday, seeking to shield its local councils from hundreds of sex-abuse lawsuits while establishing a victims' compensation trust to pay settlements. Based in Irving, Texas, the 110-year-old youth organization filed for Chapter 11 protection in federal bankruptcy court in Wilmington, Delaware, at midnight.
Courthouse News Service

Homeless

The Issue Is: Addressing homelessness in California
In 2019, 567,715 people in the US experienced homelessness on a single night. 151,278 of those individuals were in California. California's total represented a 16.4% increase over 2018, one of the largest year-to-year gains of any state, and enough to erase what would have otherwise been a national decrease in homelessness.
Fox11 Los Angeles

Camp Fire trailers now housing homeless families in Los Angeles
Trailers that once housed Camp Fire first responders are now home for several homeless families in South Los Angeles. The first 10 trailers requested from Governor Gavin Newsom arrived in Los Angeles on Thursday. The trailers were placed in an abandoned parking lot in the southern part of LA and will serve as temporary housing for families with children who are currently living on the streets or in rented motel rooms.
ABC7 Redding

Newsom calls homeless crisis 'a disgrace," vows change for California
Painting homelessness as the "ultimate manifestation of poverty" rooted in decades of political inaction, California Governor Gavin Newsom told lawmakers Wednesday the crisis has morphed into the most urgent - and disgraceful - issue facing the nation's richest state. Newsom devoted the bulk of his second State of the State address to homelessness and outlined a series of emergency actions he wants to take in order to get people off the streets, improve access to mental and behavioral health treatment and finally make a dent in a persistent housing shortage.
Courthouse News Service

UCLA CA Policy Lab working to better predict homelessness
In 2018, it is estimated that 133 homeless individuals found housing every day, but at the same time, 150 more fell into homelessness. While Los Angeles County grapples with this discrepancy, some are looking for a more effective means of prevention. Janey Rountree, executive director of the California Policy Lab based at UCLA, just co-authored a study that proposes a new approach to data analysis that will allow the county to more accurately predict those most likely to become homeless.
Spectrum News1

Guns

States are embracing red flag laws for gun owners. Here's how they work.
On February 13, the New Mexico House narrowly passed a so-called red flag law and sent it to the governor's desk. The move came just weeks after the Virginia Senate passed similar legislation. Red flag laws have

emerged as one of the most popular solutions to gun violence. But how do they work? And do they work at all? We break down the basics.
The Trace

Pensions

US lawmaker calls for ouster of CalPERS chief investment officer over China

A US Republican lawmaker on Wednesday urged California to fire the chief investment officer of its public pension fund, the nation's largest, citing what he called the CIO's "long and cozy" relationship with Beijing, and assailed the fund's investments in Chinese companies. In a letter to California Governor Gavin Newsom, US Representative Jim Banks of Indiana said Yu Ben Meng, the CIO of California Public Employees' Retirement System, should at least be investigated.
Business World

Biggest-ever CalPERS pension tops $400,000 per year

A former top investment official at CalPERS received the largest pension the retirement system has ever paid last year, according to Transparent California and reviews of pension data by The Sacramento Bee. Curtis Ishii, 64, of Sacramento, retired from the California Public Employees' Retirement System as its managing investment director for fixed income in July 2018.
Sacramento Bee

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